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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

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Claims 1-2, 4-29, and 31-40 are pending. Claims 1, 19, 28, and 38 are amended.

Applicant's undersigned attorney thanks the Examiner for his time for the telephone conference held on March 7th, 2007.

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 19-23, 28-29, 31-33, and 38-40 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Covington JR et al. (US 2003/0009448), Claims 7-15, 17, 25-27 and 34-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Covington in view of Robinson (US 7,072,846). Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Covington in view of Edwards et al. (US 2002/0038430). Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Covington in view of Gonzales (US 2002/0152087). Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Covington in view of Boyd (US 2002/0194049).

Applicants submit that all of the claims currently pending in this application are patentably distinguishable over the cited references, and reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Amended independent **claims 1 and 28** include, among other limitations, "displaying at least a portion of the stored plurality of predetermined categories," "displaying respective categorizers for the displayed predetermined categories," "selecting a category from the displayed predetermined categories by a user," "selecting a categorizer from the displayed categorizers by the user," and "initiating a search for one or more pre-existing items in the computer network based on the selected category and the selected categorizer as search parameters." Covington does not teach the above limitation.

Covington does not teach "displaying at least a portion of the stored plurality of predetermined categories," "displaying respective categorizers for the displayed predetermined categories," "selecting a category from the displayed predetermined categories by a user," and "selecting a categorizer from the displayed categorizers by the user," There is no disclosure in Covington about a categorizer being displayed and selected by the user. In most cases

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Covington's system finds the answer to the query in the database and simply displays the answer to the user making the query. Typically, there is no identification of an "expert" to the use.

In cases where an "expert" is identifiable to the user, Covington teaches a system for providing customized responses (that is generating no content and not "pre-existing" content) to a user's inquiry by providing experts designated (either by the system or a user profile) to provide a response where the database's responses are insufficient. (Abstract). Covington describes a couple of different scenarios, none of which teach the above limitation of the present invention.

In the first scenario, the user performs an inquiry on a database (independent of any experts), and only if the question is not answered by the database, then the question is automatically directed by the system to a specified expert (e.g., a payroll manger, or a third party specified by a user-profiled). (Paragraph [0021], lines 6-10). **First**, this scenario does not disclose "displaying respective categorizers for the displayed predetermined categories," and "selecting a categorizer from the displayed categorizers by the user." **Second**, this scenario does not teach "initiating a search for one or more pre-existing items in the computer network based on the selected category and the selected categorizer as search parameters," because the inquiry (search of the database) was independent of any experts and not based on the selected categorizer as search parameter.

In a second scenario, "the User's profile can [also] be arranged to direct all inquiries from the User to an expert." (Paragraph [0021], lines 1-2, underlining added.). **First**, similar to the first scenario, this second scenario does not disclose "displaying respective categorizers for the displayed predetermined categories," and "selecting a categorizer from the displayed categorizers by the user." **Second**, this scenario does not teach "initiating a search for one or more pre-existing items in the computer network based on the . . . selected categorizer as search parameters," because the inquiries directed to an expert are not the same as "initiating a search for one or more pre-existing items . . . based on the selected categorizer as search parameters." That is, the searches for the queries of Covington are NOT based on the selected categorizer as search parameters, rather, in this second scenario, they are simply directed to an expert to

provide the answer. Additionally, the answer provided by the expert in Covington is NOT a "pre-existing item," rather, it is "newly generated" item.

In a third scenario, "should the <u>responses fail</u> [that is, a query was already submitted to the database] to satisfy the User, the User is given the option to <u>contact experts</u> and request a response that is narrowly tailored to the inquiry. The <u>system selects one or more Experts on the bases of the User's profile and the nature of the question.</u>" (Paragraph [0010], lines 8-14, emphasis added.). Again, this scenario does not teach "<u>initiating a search for one or more items in the computer network</u> corresponding to the selected category and the selected categorizer," as required by independent claims 1 and 28. **First**, similar to the first scenario, this third scenario does not disclose "displaying respective categorizers for the displayed predetermined categories," and "selecting a categorizer from the displayed categorizers by the user." **Second**, in this scenario the query is submitted to the database without having it based on any (selected) expert. It is only <u>after</u> the responses (search results) fail to satisfy the user, that the user can <u>contact experts</u> and request a response. **Third**, even, in this situation, contacting an expert does not constitute "initiating a search for one or more pre-existing items. . . based on the selected categorizer as search parameters." Again, the answer provided by the expert in Covington is NOT a "pre-existing item," rather, it is "newly generated" item.

Indeed, Covington is very clear about this by stressing that "upon receiving the customer inquiry, in step 2200, the system <u>forwards the inquiry to the designated Expert</u>. Forwarding the custom inquiry to the Expert could entail, for example, <u>forwarding only the text of the question to the expert or it could entail identifying the inquiring party</u>." (Paragraph [0034], lines 1-5, underlining added.). "The Expert response in step 2300 to the user's inquiry by <u>forwarding a response</u> to the system. (Paragraph [0035], lines 1-2, underlining added.). This forwarded response is created by the expert and thus is NOT a "pre-existing" item.

As a result, independent claims 1 and 28 are not anticipated by Covington and are thus patentable over the cited references.

Amended independent **claims 19 and 38** include, among other limitations, "selecting a category from <u>the displayed</u> plurality of predetermined categories by the authorized categorizer,"

"displaying <u>cost and incentive</u> for the authorized categorizer for the selected category," and "storing the identified item, the applied category, and the authorized categorizer in the database." Again, Covington does not teach the above limitations.

Rather, in Covington's system, a Database Reviewer or a system provider can add additional categories and structure to the proposed database. (Paragraph [0047], lines 1-5). **First**, there is no disclosure in Covington about "selecting a category from <u>the displayed</u> plurality of predetermined categories by the authorized categorizer." **Second**, there is no teaching in Covington about "displaying cost and incentive for the authorized categorizer for the selected category." Applicant respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assertion that Covington disclosure of a "401(k) Plan" in paragraph [0021] teaches the above limitation. Rather, paragraph [0021] of Covington teaches that "the expert can be an accountant having expertise concerning payroll and 401(k) Plan." (Id., last two lines.). This means that if the query submitted by the user was related to question about a "401(k) Plan," an expert knowledgeable in "401(k) Plans" can then answer the query. In contrast, according to claims 19 and 38, "cost and incentive for the authorized categorizer for the selected category" is displayed to the authorized categorizer because "[b]efore making a categorization, the categorizers may want to know how much it will cost, as well as what financial incentive, if any, will be paid to them when users select an item via their categorization." (See, specification, page 11, lines 13-16.).

Third, there is no disclosure in Covington about "storing the identified item, the applied category, and the authorized categorizer in the database." Rather, the experts of Covington, if any, are referred to by a user profile which is different for different users.

Consequently, amended independent claims 19 and 38 are not anticipated by Covington either and are also patentable over the cited references.
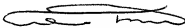
In short, independent claims 1, 19, 28 and 38 define a novel and unobvious invention over the cited references. Dependent claims 2, 4-18, 20-27, 29, 31-37, and 39-40 are dependent from claims 1, 19, 28 and 38, respectively and therefore include all the limitations of their respective independent claims and additional limitations therein. Accordingly, these claims are

also allowable over the cited references, as being dependent from allowable independent claims and for the additional limitations they include therein.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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